

**English 11 (Pre AP Language and Composition)**  
**Summer Reading Journal**  
**Mr. Smith and Another Teacher**

INTRODUCTION

This summer you will be expected to read Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (ISBN: **0767902890**). O'Brien's book is a loosely connected series of stories about the Vietnam War.

Annotate as you read—mark key passages, words, ideas, etc. I suggest that you look over the given themes before you read and as you read. For your reference as you take on the writing task, note passages that deal with these themes.

You will also be writing two essays. These will be due during the first week of school. I recommend that you begin work on the essays as soon as you finish the novel; do not wait until the last few days—I will notice, I promise, and your grade will reflect my observation.

ESSAYS

Select **two** themes from the novel and write a 2 page (about 700 words) analysis for each theme. In other words, you will be writing two, two-page essays (works cited not necessary). You must make reference to at least 3 separate chapters/stories in each essay. (Don't bother doing the math—just read the entire book and respond accordingly).

Some of the themes and issues developed and treated in *The Things they Carried* include:

- Fear of shame as a motivation
- Truth being subject to storytelling
- “Things carried”—physical (symbols of...?) and emotional/psychological
- Anxiety/pressure to adhere to some communal standard of duty, courage, or patriotism
- War and love (this is intentionally general—your analysis will require specification)

FORMAT

Use standard MLA formatting. Completed journals should be typed. See The Owl at Purdue (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>), also on my Portal page, for help with formatting.

CONTACT

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